



southern california dx club

OCTOBER 2002



Soap Box— Words from our President

Well!!! Here it is the middle of September and I'm trying to figure out what to write for the October Newsletter. I'm up in San Jose at the QTH of Al, AD6E and have just finished recabling his 70 ft tower and repairing the 40 meter beam. All in anticipation of a new DX season.



DXing from down under. Herb was very appreciative for the 20 minutes. Tony is also looking to operate while here. He's staying in Los Angeles near Pico and La Cienega. We hope he to see him at the next meeting.

Herb did another fine job on the raffle. Be sure to buy your ticket early at the next meeting.

I guess this month is the official start with the CQWW phone contest. I always like to get in there and look for new countries and bands. Of course, now I have to share the station with N6GIL and KF6RKU. Maybe it's time for a Multi-Multi setup. All three of us are still waiting for our VP6DI card.

For those who missed the last meeting, we had a visitor from Australia. Tony, VK2KYM is in Los Angeles on work relates business. He gave a nice impromptu talk on operating and

I'm now on HF mobile from my van. Picked up a Kenwood TS-130 from an estate and already had the antennas from a previous mobile, so it was pretty simple to set up. Already have worked several club members.

That's about it from up here. I'll be here for about a week. See you at the meeting.

CQWW DX Contest

It is that time of year again.

The CQWWDX contest will take place as follows:

Phone: October 26 and 27

CW: November 23 and 24

The contest starts at 0000 GMT on Saturday.

The contest ends at 24000 GMT on Sunday.

Rules may be downloaded from <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/cqwwhome>

Virus Attack!

There are dozens of new viruses showing up on e-mail daily. It is very important that every one use an up to date virus detector and scan your computer often. This week I received two copies of an email that was "from" me. It contained a virus that was sent by an infected machine using the address book found there.

NEVER open a file if you are the least bit unsure. It is also important to never use open mailing lists—ALWAYS USE BLIND COPY. That will also help the SPAM problem as it will deprive the spammers of a source of addresses.

VP6DI QSLs

Six months after the completion of the DXpedition the QSL manager still has about 5,000 cards to answer.

NCDXF ELECTION

At its Board of Directors meeting on September 22, 2002 the Northern California DX Foundation re-elected the following officers and directors:

President Len Gerald K6ANP
Vice President Al Burnham K6RIM
Secretary Tom McShane NW6P
Treasurer Bruce Butler W6OSP
Director Rusty Epps W6OAT
Director Dave Pugatch KI6WF
Director Chuck Ternes N6OJ
Director Glenn Vinson W6OTC
Director Steve Merchant K6AW
Director Ken Anderson K6TA

Newly elected as a director was Tim Totten, N4GN.

Next General Meeting

The SCDXC meets the second Thursday of the month. Our next meeting will be held at 7:30 P.M. on October 10, 2002 at Sid Rosenthal Park in Culver City. The park is located 4 blocks west of La Cienega Blvd. and 2 blocks south of Washington Blvd. From the 10 Freeway exit La Cienega south to Washington Blvd. Turn right (west) 4 blocks to McManus Ave (it's La Cienega Ave to the right, McManus to the left). Turn left (south) 2 blocks to the Park. The street dead-ends at the parking lot.

Please do not park in the school lot.

See ya there!

Ham Puzzle

Answer to last months puzzle:

Remember V.H. Ham wanted to walk up his 200 lb tower. What force would he and the giant Grizzly Bear need?

The force needed is 60 feet X 200 pounds/4 X 5 feet or 545 pounds. Easier for the grizzly, as his force needed is 60 feet X 200 pounds/4X9 feet or only 333 pounds. He gets off easier than you, and any way Skip refuses to talk to Grizzly Bears

A change of pace this month as we look at a picture from an old handbook.

Anyone remember these antennas?

E-Mail Addresses

Reminder — if you change your email address please inform the club membership chairman.

Spotting Derby

de K6EXO

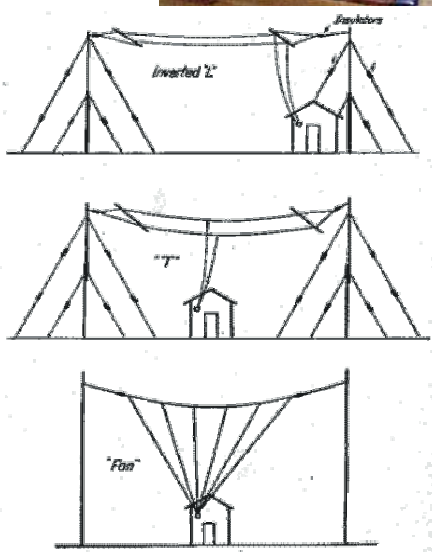
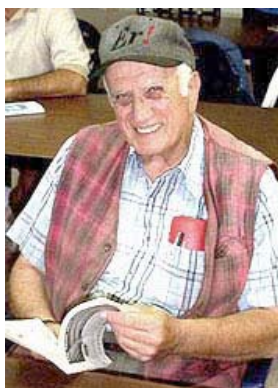


Changes in the S Cal DX Cluster to improve reliability are underway. I hope they will

soon be complete. Much of the very old radios and computers will be retired and replaced with newer equipment. Unsupported software is also scheduled to be replaced. So. Lets see who is still working DX during the summer doldrums.

Spotter	Spots	Score
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W6TG	64	255
W6AUG	53	185
WB6RSE	34	107
WA6TLA	28	97
K6YRA	15	68
W6LAX	22	50

By Milt, W6RJO



AD6KQ	18	48
K2PLF	10	35
N6IC	12	22
W6VX	8	20
W6RW	7	19
K6YUI	6	18
KC6X	4	17
N6RT	5	16
KG6OK	4	13
AK6I	5	12
KC6T	3	10
K6FG	1	6
W6ZH	1	6
K6IRA	5	5
K6WM	2	5
W6SR	2	4
AI6Z	1	4
W6NRQ	2	2
W7RF	1	2
AA6RK	1	1
KI6ZS	1	1
N6KZ	1	1

Travel with Ham Gear after 9/11?

K6ACZ asks the question:

Would anyone who has traveled with a HF rig since 9/11/01 please pass on to me their experiences and recommendations. I travel to DU every 2 or 3 years for the CQWWDX and/or ARRL 10 meter Contests. My previous trips there were before 9/11 and I had no problem hand carrying my TS-50 and AT-50 in their carry case. I was once asked at LAX what it was and I showed the security checker the TS-50 Operating Manual and they allowed it no problem. I have traveled to Europe since 9/11 WITHOUT a rig and noticed the increase in airport security. I will be departing from LAX and will have a layover with an additional security check in Hong Kong. On my return, I will have security checks at Manila and again at Hong Kong. I have nightmares of the security people confiscating my rig, questioning me, and causing me to miss my non-refundable fare flight. If I were to instead pack it in my checked baggage, and the bag was later x-rayed and they thought it was suspicious, what would they then do?

My travel agent and the airline people at Cathay Pacific are no help, they suggest I leave it at home. But it is kind of hard to work a contest without a rig.

I will also have a laptop for logging and have no problem if they ask me to turn it on to prove it is operational. But what about the TS-50? I would need to find power to plug it in, and then all it could put out would be static with no antenna.

I know some of you DXer's out there must have traveled with a rig since 9/11/01 and may be able to share your experiences with me.

TIA & 73

"What we did on summer vacation"

K6YRA & W6BUN

At the end of July we embarked on a driving trip to visit Bo & Ulla, N7BK & K7AFB in Redmond, WA (near Seattle). Along the way we had the good fortune to visit many old friends.



Our first stop was in Ni-pomo, CA where we met John, W6KFV, W6ED, Don, K6TX, Byron and W6JD and his XYL for lunch. We then visited John's home and saw his

station, KT34XA, TS950SDX and home-built amplifier. John is one of my first ham friends of 45 years.

We then headed for Placerville, CA where we had a delightful 2-day visit with Rick, W6SR



and Karen, WB6OKK in their lovely home. Rick has two complete stations in a fabulous location with many antennas under construction.

A trip to Lake Tahoe and many good meals will be long remembered.



Next, we stopped by Rich, K7ZV and Barbara in Grants Pass, OR. From high up in his cherry picker, we were not only able to see his 80 meter 3 element on 120' tower from the top, but we were also afforded an

ominous view of the many forest fires that were burning all around his location. His second tower supports a Bencher tribander.



After a very nice visit and a great lunch we forged on.

Finally, we arrived at our destination where we received a warm welcome from Bo, N7BK and Ulla,



Next day we all took a ferry from Seattle across to the QTH of Gordon and Lynn Marshall at Foul Weather Bluff (Hainseville), WA. His location is high on top of a bluff, overlooking the shipping channel where we could see submarines passing. Gordon, W6RR (W6ITA) is a charter member of the SCDXC.

He has many colossal antennas such as 3 ele 80M at 170' (in disrepair), 4 ele 40M at 120' and a triband log that he uses for his morning 20M scheds with long time friends in So. CA. Gordon says "I'm not interested in contests or DX anymore, only ragchews with friends."



After settling in with them in their lovely home, Al was happy using Bo's KT34XA, IC765 and SB220 in a beautifully forested location. We all took a day trip to Mt. Rainer, walked through the beautiful wild-flowers and through the fog we caught a glimpse of the peak, offering a chance for many photos.



Al and Gordon spent time reminiscing about old friends who are now silent keys. After a nice lunch we hopped back on the ferry sightseeing along the way back to Redmond.



Bo & Al spent an afternoon with old friend, DXer Norm, W7LFA in Kirkland, WA (the original home of Costco) and saw his big Quad at 120' and his remote home-built amplifiers. Norm owns a WWII Jeep with mounted machine gun that he is very proud of.

It was a great trip visiting old friends.

Propagation October 2002

by Shel, W6EL



These predictions for the five prime HF bands show the times when propagation is expected to be best from Los Angeles to several locations that are expected to be active during the coming month. Other times are possible, but with weaker signals or lower probability. Openings are not expected on bands that are not listed. A solar flux of 192, corresponding to a sunspot number of 148, and an average geomagnetic field are assumed. Sunrise/sunset times are at the DX location. All times are UTC. Good luck and good DX from Shel, W6EL.

GJ Jersey - 10/5 to 10/12 - Beam 37 degrees
Sunrise/sunset (on 10/9)
0625/1726
80: 0300-0630.
40: 0100-0800.
20: 2230-1100.
15: 1430-2200.
10: 1600-1930

ZK1 South Cook Is. - 10/7 to 10/15 - Beam 222 degrees
Sunrise/sunset (on 10/11)
1612/0433
80: 0700-1300.
40: 0530-1330.
20: 0330-1500.
15: 0030-1900.
10: 1600-0930.

JD1 Ogasawara - 10/8 to

10/16 - Beam 297 degrees
Sunrise/sunset (on 10/12)
2032/0803
80: 0930-1400.
40: 0730-1430.
20: 0530-1700.
15: 2000-0530 and around 1600.
10: 2100-0330.

XX9 Macao - 10/10 to 10/22 - Beam 311 degrees
Sunrise/sunset (on 10/16)
2226/0957
80: 1130-1830.
40: 0930-1500.
20: 0730-1730.
15: 1600-1800 and 2200-0430.
10: 2300-0230.

GU Guernsey - 10/11 to 10/27 - Beam 36 degrees
Sunrise/sunset (on 10/19)
0641/1706
80: 0230-0330.
40: 0030-0800.
20: 2200-0800, 1130-1200 and around 1000.
10: 1600-1900.

We Visit N6DHz



The HF Station consists of a Kenwood TS-950SDX with a Heathkit SB-200 Amplifier (Tnx to K6YUI & W6IRD). Antenna's are a Cushcraft R5 Vertical at 20FT for 10m-20m and a Van Gordon Parallel dipole for 40m & 80 at 30FT. I bought a Daiwa CL-666 2.5 KW Antenna Coupler at this years auction from Skip, KJ6Y and have a Heil Goldline GM-4.



I haven't done much on 6m this cycle but I do enjoy 6m. I use an Icom IC-551D and a M2 HO Loop @ 30FT. Hopefully I will get at least a small beam



Do you have a hard time getting QSLs? I seem to do pretty well as this QSL from the 12th Century will prove. I worked several "Merry Men" at Robin Hood Camp. This is a Boy Scout camp located in Sherwood forest. I worked the mobile on 10m.



Have you ever wondered how much postage it takes to get a QSL card from Fiji to the USA. The answer is twenty three 3C stamps, leaving just enough room for my address. This was a new one for me on 15m so I didn't care how many stamps it took. Tnx to 3D2AG/P, Rotuma Island for the "New One"



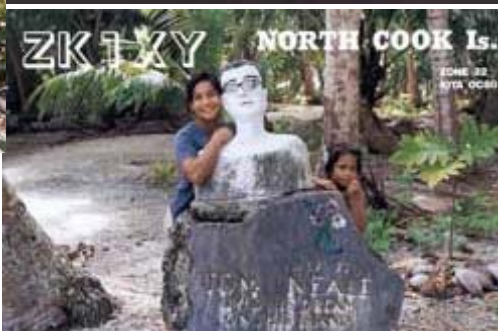
My Halo
Yep, it works!



A new project is the cub web page. I am now the web master and invite you to check out the "work in process" as the page is being developed. Visit at www.scdxc.org and give me your comments.



The very moderate antenna farm can be seen (if you look very hard) in this shot. I think the flag pole is a nice touch too.



In 1990 and 1991 Kiyoko Yamakami made a DXpedition to 11 different island in the pacific. I was able to work her on 6 of the islands. As much fun as it was chasing Kiyoko all over the pacific the best part was getting the QSL cards. Her cards are without a doubt some of the finest I have in my collection.

Retirement DXing: **The WA5VGI Experience**

Part 4: Tower Collapse

(ed: the saga continues)

With the addition of the new 72 foot motorized tower (Tri-Ex LM-470E), 2-element 40 meter yagi (EF-240S) and tribander (C-19XR) I was enjoying DXing as I never had before. Anyone who has switched from a wire or vertical antenna to a beam on 40 meters knows the difference a yagi makes. I enjoyed working the long path into Europe and the middle east in the early mornings and often Merle (K6DC - now SK) and I would battle for the first contact. Usually Merle would win but occasionally I'd be first and I could read Merle's mind wondering who this "VGI" fellow was. At the time of the tower installation we moved the boom lift over to the mast mounted C-3 and I installed an inverted V for 30 meters. Also a 4-element antenna for 2 meters was purchased and installed on an upper deck of our house to allow connection to the DX6/K6UR packet system over 100 miles east of my QTH. I had been without use of the packet cluster for over 2 years and it was fun to be connected again and have an assist in DX chasing. All of the antennas and support structures made it through our winter storm season without problems or damage. Up here you breathe a sigh of relief when the last rain storm is



finally gone!

In October of 2000 Tom, N6BT of Force-12 had designed a new 160 meter vertical (Mag-160VX). It was double-linear loaded, 62 feet in height and incorporated 2 elevated radials approximately 135 feet in length. After seeing the prototype at his shop I decided that I needed something better than my GAP vertical on 160 meters and in No-

vember we installed the prototype 160 meter vertical on the property ridgeline. Some adjacent oak trees assisted in stringing the 15 foot high elevated radials and also hiding them from sight. With the removal of the GAP vertical I now had no antenna for 80 meters. "No problem" said Tom who had been trying to talk me into trying out a rotatable dipole on that band. So in early December of 2000 we installed a Mag-180B rotary dipole between the 2-el 40 meter beam and the C-19XR tribander on the new tower. The performance of both new antennas was outstanding. During the 2000/2001 winter season I made several contacts into

Europe on 160 using the new vertical and was able to work into Europe on 75/80 on both the long and short paths using the rotary dipole. Country counts on both bands increased far beyond my expectations and I was having a ball on the low bands. Even the little 30 meter inverted V did its job adding ZD9 and others to the country count.

Our winter storm season usually ends mid-March. The winter storm season of 2000/2001 had been similar to the previous year with no storms producing >60 mph in velocity. That changed abruptly the 3rd week of March 2001. That night the wind screamed and howled. Our stone shingles rattled on the roof and you could actually feel the wind gusts against our two story home. At first light I looked out our bedroom towards the new tower and knew something was very wrong. The beams were not in their original locations and I could see one of the elements on the C-19XR was badly bent. Upon going outside and walking to the tower it was clear what had happened. The rotor had broken from over torque due to the high loads and left the stack free-wheeling in the wind. I could see torn insulation on both coax lines and control cables which were now wound tight around the mast. The tips of the rotary dipole (element length was 72 feet) had been broken off and the 20 meter elements damaged on the C-19XR tribander. Checking the C-3



and 30 meter inverted V had me feeling better as they came through unscathed. But the other antennas/cables/rotor were going to require some heavy repair work. For information, my neighbor up the ridge road had recorded gusts of over 90 mph during the storm. I felt lucky having anything survive. A few more weeks of wet/damp weather precluded getting a boom lift out and repairing the damage from the storm. That gave me some time to think out the situation and also entertain some new antenna plans.

I had been thinking about putting up a tribander for the WARC bands (30/17/12 meters) on the new tower and also moving my C-19XR over to my 45 foot mast in place of the C-3 tribander. Also Tom, N6BT said

he had a boom and another 80 meter element at the shop and we could turn my rotary dipole into a 2-element yagi. I was going to have to purchase a new



rotor anyhow so what the heck why not do the whole job in one shot. So in May a boom lift was rented once again, a new rotor installed, the 80 meter rotary dipole replaced with a 2-element yagi and a WARC band tribander (WARC-7) installed in place of the C-19XR. Voila - I now had beams on 8 bands and a great vertical for 160 meters. Doesn't get much better than that.

Optimum performance of the 2-element 80 meter yagi was predicated on obtaining the maximum F/B at the operating frequencies. My yagi incorporated a relay box with loading coils so that I could **switch from the 75 meter SSB DX window (3.790MHz) to the CW DX**



window (~3.510 MHz). The maximum F/B was finally obtained by adjusting the reflector frequency and using my C-19 on 80 meters as a reference antenna to measure F/B. It took the better part of an afternoon but finally optimum F/Bs were obtained on both SSB and CW. On the air tests confirmed the settings.

Although the long-path to Europe was gone on 75/80 meters by this time checks showed that the beam performed well on the short path to all continents.

Spring was now here, the antenna work behind **me and only weed**-whacking and picking up around the property were on the "need to do" list. I was looking forward to summer.

Working the long path on 75 meter SSB had introduced me to a great group of fellow DXers. Typically on an early morning around 3.790 MHz you would find K6UA, W6UC, K7ZV, W6RJ, N6OU, W6RR, W6ZJ and others either working Asia, Oceania or just kibitzing outside the DX window. On July 20, 2001 I got up around 5:30 AM to join the above group. I had gotten in the habit of lowering my tower at night since we still got some high gusting winds, usually thermally driven, in the late afternoons and evenings. I opened my garage door and stepped out into a beautiful morning with the stars still shining. I activated the remote switch mounted on the wall near the garage door and the tower started its climb upward. At around the 60 foot level I suddenly heard a loud grinding noise and immediately turned off the motor on the tower. I took my flashlight and went out to the tower

to **see if** something had jammed or was interfering with raising the tower. A close examination showed nothing obvious. Not sure what else to do at this point I decided that I would lower the tower from its extended position. I put the switch on the tower in the down position and in less than a second I heard very loud noise akin to a freight train. I dove to the ground covering my head as I fell while the tower collapsed vertically shearing off half of the WARC-7 boom and several pieces of elements which narrowly missed my head. I was not even up from the ground when my XYL Linda shouted from the garage if I was okay. Shaking and bruised I replied that I was okay.



Once back on my feet I saw the damage was extensive and fatal as far as the tower was concerned. The bottoms of the 3 inside sections were badly crushed, the cable broken in several places, the mast had pushed the rotor and mounting plate down through the tower until the boom of the WARC-7 had struck the top section and partially sheared and the element tips were broken/bent

on both the 40 and 80 meter yagis. What a mess!!! Fortunately no one was injured except for my minor scrapes.

Tom, N6BT was kind enough to come over a few hours later and climb the tower to see what might have caused the failure. He was able to pin-point the cause immediately and take some pictures with his digital camera. Looking at the photo one can see that the left side of the pulley wall on the outboard pulley is completely missing and the cable left an imprint where that material is missing.

What happened is that the tower had been sold with a top pulley misaligned such that over a short period of time of raising and lowering the tower the cable wore through the sidewall of the pulley and finally began to track on the bolt holding the pulley in the tower assembly. The cable probably jammed into this space where under tension due to raising the tower it failed.

To say I was discouraged at this point would have been an understatement. But like a lot of DXers I have lots of perseverance. Like the Phoenix rising from the ashes I would start over. But this time with a lot of lessons learned under my belt.

(to be continued)

The Beer Prayer

Our Lager,
which art in Barrels,
Hallowed be thy drink,
I will be drunk,
at home as in the tavern.

Give us this day our
foamy head,
and forgive us our spill-
ages,
As we forgive those who
spill against us.

And lead us not into incarceration,
But deliver us from hangovers,
For thine is the beer the bitter and the lager
Forever and ever,



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